



the wyoming game & fish department

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LANDER REGION

Photo by Stan Harter

Under the Water and In the Air

Multi-unit effort sampling in the high country



Llama pack string headed into Stough Creek drainage.

Several Game and Fish work units from across the State came together to sample different species that reside in the Stough Creek drainage south west of Lander. Stough Creek is a tributary to the Middle Fork Popo Agie River, and is located within the Popo Agie Wilderness of the Shoshone National Forest.

The Lander fisheries management crew spearheaded the eight day survey. They were joined by Non-game Biologists Brian Zinke, Jarek Bernt, and Jaime Smith surveying for water voles and bats; Herpetologist Zack Lange and his crew surveying for reptiles and amphibians; Brady Frude and Jason Hunter conducting backcountry hunting and fishing enforcement; and Office Manager Showanda Fontaine. Unfortunately no reptiles or amphibians were detected, however

multiple small mammals were captured including 12 water voles and a montane shrew. Several bats were also detected using acoustic recorders set up at night. Analysis are ongoing to determine which bat species were found. No enforcement violations were detected, but everyone involved learned a lot about the drainage and the fish and wildlife in the area.

The fisheries crew saw healthy fish populations throughout the Stough Creek drainage. Brook trout were the most common species, followed by Snake River cutthroat trout. Both species were found in Stough Creek and in Blackrock, Footprint, Cutthroat, Shoal, Stough, and Little Stough lakes. High numbers of brook trout were also found in Toadstool and Upper Toadstool Lakes.

Unique opportunities to capture Yellowstone cutthroat trout and splake (brook trout/lake trout hybrid) also exist within the drainage. Yellowstone cutthroat trout are helicopter-stocked by the Game and Fish into Upper Toadstool Lake every four years, and fish up to 14 inches were captured this year. In addition, splake up to 16 inches were captured in Palette Lake, where they have maintained their population through natural reproduction since they were first stocked in 1977.

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If you are interested in checking out the Stough Creek drainage next year, it can be accessed by hiking approximately eight miles (or use llamas like our crews do) from the Stough Creek Lakes Trailhead at Worthen Meadows Reservoir off the Louis Lake Rd. The fisheries crew utilizes llamas almost every year for sampling high country lakes. They are a cost



Picture above: Fisheries technician Jake Werner with 3.5 lb Snake River cutthroat trout. Above right: Nongame Biologist Brian Zinke with a water vole.



efficient way to get sampling equipment into these areas and llamas can be easily taken to off-trail waters. Cooperation with other work units to sample as many animals as possible is also an efficient way for Game and Fish to gather data, while learning about what co-workers are doing.

Beside the Fallen

25 years since the loss



A postcard distributed during the years of search efforts.

This month marks 25 years since the morning of Oct. 16, 1991, when a chartered plane took off with two bear biologists in search of a radio-collared grizzly bear that may have been wounded by an elk hunter. The plane never returned to the Jackson Airport and remained lost until nearly four years later.

The fatal crash launched the most extensive search in Wyoming history and a wound in the hearts of families, Game and Fish coworkers, regional bear researchers and many Wyomingites in general.

Lost were Game and Fish's Kirk Inberg and Kevin Roy along with private pilot Ray Austin.

Inberg, 28, was a game warden with the responsibility of investigating conflicts between grizzly bears and humans. He was a Riverton native who earned a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology from the University of Montana. He started his Game and Fish career in May 1982. He worked on the construction crew, on the



Serving Dubois, Rawlins, Lander, Riverton and places between

grizzly bear aversive conditioning research study team, and he patrolled the Medicine Bow game warden district, before returning to the bear program in 1990.

Roy, 26, had been a special projects grizzly biologist with the Game and Fish since June 1990. He graduated from high school in El Paso, Texas before earning a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology from Texas A&M University and a master's from the University of Montana.



Austin, 47, was an experienced pilot logging over 6,200 flight hours including 1,800 in a Maule M5-235, the plane flown that day. He had worked for Western Air Research of Alta, Wyoming for 18 months.

Nearly four years after the crash, a bugling elk led a pair of hunters to



Left to right: pilot Ray Austin, Warden Kirk Inberg, and Biologist Kevin Roy.

the wreckage on Soda Mountain near the Fremont-Teton county line between Togwotee Pass and Yellowstone National Park. It appeared the plane crashed at a steep angle and all three men were killed upon impact. Only two trees were clipped and wreckage was scattered only about 200 feet. The scene was so obscure, even with the exact location it took two sets of eyes in a subsequent flight 30 minutes to locate the wreckage. A brass plaque now commemorates the site.

All Game and Fish flights were temporarily suspended following the fatal crash as the department examined its flight policy. The Game and Fish has suffered plane crashes since – but thankfully no more fatalities. In 1992, the Wyoming Chapter of The Wildlife Society established the Memorial Bear Fund to honor the victims. The fund has helped finance bear projects from South America to the Arctic. It remains active and is now administered by Wyoming Wildlife – The Foundation. That year

the East Fork Wildlife Habitat Management Area near Dubois was also renamed for Inberg and Roy, and a memorial was placed just west of the Dennison cabin up the East Fork Road.



Above: Large Carnivore Biologist Dan Bjornlie at the crash site in 2016. At right: the memorial at the Dennison Cabin.



With the Carnivores

Safety is a top priority

With more people in the field, Game and Fish urges hunters to be cautious. Below are some helpful hints to increase your “bear awareness” while hunting. These are worth reading and doing!

Safety Tips for Hunting in Bear Country

During the Hunt:

- Hunt with a partner.
- Have ready and know how to use a bear deterrent, like bear spray.
- Learn to recognize bear scat, diggings, and tracks.
- Be cautious in dense timber or brush and along creeks and waterways.
- Always remain alert for sudden encounters.
- Know where seasonal food sources are and avoid or be very cautious.
- Beware presence of ravens and other scavengers is a good indication that a carcass and a bear may be in the area.

Retrieval of game meat:

- Separate carcass from entrails, or edible portions from the carcass, and remove edible portions from the area and the field as soon as possible.
- If you must leave the carcass, try to hang it at least 10' to 15' from the ground and 4' from the tree trunk. And at least 100 yards away from your camp.
- If you cannot hang it, place it in plain view so when you return, you can see if a bear is present or if it has been disturbed prior to making your approach. Placing something conspicuous on the carcass may help you detect if there has been a bear at the carcass (for example branches or an article of clothing that can easily be seen from a long distance).



Grizzly bear track, front paw.



Grizzly bear photo by Mark Gocke.



With the Wardens

Field notes

Game Warden Brian Baker was busy checking backcountry archery elk hunters near Dubois in September. On one of his trips with Lander Region Supervisor Jason Hunter, Brian contacted a nonresident hunter hunting alone in the wilderness area in elk hunt area 67 north of Dubois. He was also hunting with a license that was only valid in an area near Cody. Brian issued two citations to the hunter and explained the regulations to him.



At left and above, Game Warden Brian Baker in the field.



Rawlins Warden

Teal Joseph assisted in the rescue of a fawn mule deer who found itself stuck in a neighborhood fence in Rawlins. Once removed from the fence, Teal assessed the deer for any serious injuries. After finding none, the deer was released and quickly returned to the side of a doe deer nearby.



Warden Joseph helping the fawn.

Lander Warden Brady Frude also assisted a fawn in Lander after it got attacked by a dog. Thanks to the dog owner's quick intervention, the fawn was released with only a flesh wound. He has also had the opportunity to check a lot of happy hunters and anglers this month.

Riverton Warden

Jessica Beecham

released a Swainson's hawk on behalf of Susan Ahalt of Ironside Bird Rescue



Swainson's hawk

in Cody. Several other Swainson's hawks were in the area, which is important for this young bird who should now be able to migrate south with them.



Happy angler along the Red Canyon public access area of the Little Popo Agie River.



In the Field

Your help to detect CWD



CWD Technician Rebecca Burton and Biologist Greg Hiatt take CWD samples at the Rawlins check station.

Hunters are pivotal in Game and Fish's detection of the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease. Regional personnel have been collecting samples from deer, elk and moose throughout the area and we want to thank hunters who have contributed samples and remind them that they have the following options to have their deer, elk or moose tested in the future:

- Game and Fish check stations - these are established throughout the state during big game seasons.
- In the field - when in contact with a game warden, wildlife biologist, or other employee collecting CWD samples.
- Wyoming State Veterinary Lab - Hunters wishing to have their animal tested outside the Department's monitoring program may contact the Wyoming State Veterinary Lab in Laramie for details and cost. The telephone number is (307) 766-9925.
- Game and Fish regional offices - in many cases, if a hunter stops at a Game and Fish office to get a CWD sample collected, the hunter will have to leave the head at the office until such time a warden or biologist is available to take the sample, as they are in the field a majority of the hunting season. But, stop by to check or call first to see what arrangements can be made.

Hunters who participate in the CWD surveillance program by providing deer, elk, or moose tissue samples and provide adequate information, can obtain test results at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/services/education/cwd/surveillance/frmllookup.aspx>.

For more information about CWD in Wyoming, visit the WGFD website at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Wildlife-in-Wyoming/More-Wildlife/Wildlife-Disease/Chronic-Wasting-Disease>

Come join us
at the Library
to learn all
about bats!



Sydney Harrison



Bats in the Bookshelves

With Lander Library & Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Oct. 29, 10am – 2pm
Little Theater @ Lander
Library

Bat facts ~ Bat activities
Bat crafts ~ Bat books

Costumes encouraged!

